

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MEXICO 06865 01 OF 02 130212Z

72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13

JUSE-00 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15

NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01 AGR-20 HEW-08 AID-20 DODE-00

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R 130051Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7941

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 6865

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR/MX

SUBJ: NARCOTICS DEMARCHE TO PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA

REF: MEXICO 6818; MEXICO 5506

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING ARE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND ATTORNEY GENERAL OJEDA PAULLADA AND RELATED SUBJECTS.

END SUMMARY:

2. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA DEMONSTRATED KEEN AND AT TIMES ENTHUSIASTIC INTEREST IN PROPOSALS PRESENTED BY AMBASSADOR, MOST SUBSTANTIVE REACTIONS AND COMMENTS WERE MADE BY ATTORNEY GENERAL. AG RECOGNIZED PROBLEMS POSED BY SPREAD OF BROWN HEROIN IN THE UNITED STATES BUT FOCUSED HIS PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE ON OUR CHARTS TO INTERPRET THEM MORE AS INDICATION OF WIDER DISTRIBUTION THAN NECESSARILY A PROPORTIONAL INCREASE IN TOTAL QUANTITIES AVAILABLE. HE PERCEIVED CERTAIN STATISTICAL LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS POSED BY THE TIME FRAME INVOLVED AND THE LIMITED SIZE OF THE SAMPLE. HE EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IMPROVED INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, INFORMATION EXCHANGE AND POLICE WORK COULD ALSO HELP EXPLAIN INCREASE IN SEIZURES OF
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PAGE 02 MEXICO 06865 01 OF 02 130212Z

BROWN HEROIN AS WELL AS OF OTHER DRUGS. HE SAID WE COULD

EXPECT INCREASED SEIZURES IN THE FUTURE AS MEXICO/US EFFORTS CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. HE REFERRED, FOR EXAMPLE, TO FALLOUT OF INFORMATION IN CATANIA CASE WHICH IS PROVIDING A NUMBER OF ADDITION LEADS AND IMPORTANT NAMES IN TRAFFIC IN BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO. HE REELED OFF A SERIES OF THESE NAMES WHICH SEEMED TO IMPRESS THE PRESIDENT. HE DESCRIBED TO THE PRESIDENT RECENTLY INTENSIFIED EFFORTS IN KEY AREAS OF MEXICO AND RESULTS OBTAINED. AS EXAMPLE HE CITED MAJOR DRIVE IN THE SAN LUIS COLORADO AND MAGDALENA AREAS BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND JUNE OF THIS YEAR WHICH HAD RESULTED IN SEIZURES OF 50 TONS OF MARIJUANA, 24 AIRCRAFT, AND 200 ARRESTS.

3. ON "COMPASS TRIP" IDEA, AG POINTED OUT THAT HE HAD BEEN FOLLOWING WITH INTEREST DEVELOPMENTS IN REMOTE SENSING AND OTHER SUCH PROGRAMS THROUGH DEA AND PREDECESSOR AGENCIES. HE INDICATED THAT LOCATION OF FIELDS HAD BEEN LESS OF A PROBLEM THAN REACHING THEM AND DESTROYING PLANTINGS. HE SAID THAT THE ADDITIONAL HELICOPTER CAPABILITY PROVIDED BY THE TWO TROOP CARRYING BELL HELOS RECEIVED FROM THE USG PERMITTED HIM TO COVER FIVE TIMES AS MUCH TERRAIN AS BEFORE. HE ADDED THAT INCREASED FLIGHTS OF HIS SPOTTER AIRCRAFT IN CRISS-CROSS PATTERNS NOW PROVIDED TRIANGULATION AND MORE PRECISE IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING OF GROWING AREAS. HE DID NOT PRONOUNCE SPECIFICALLY ON THE NEW HELICOPTER PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL BUT BY IMPLICATION RECOGNIZED THE ADVANTAGES OF THE ADDITIONAL LARGE AIRCRAFT.

4. AS BACKGROUND TO ABOVE, IT WORTH NOTING THAT IN PRIOR CONVERSATIONS AG HAD SHOWN SOME INTEREST IN TASK FORCE CONCEPT AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ADDITIONAL PILOT AND MAINTENANCE TRAINING (MEXICO 5506). GIVEN PRESIDENTIAL INTEREST, IN ADDITION TO INTRINSIC MERIT OF BOTH TASK FORCE AND "COMPASS TRIP" PROPOSALS, THEY WILL NOT BE DISMISSED LIGHTLY BUT WILL RECEIVE MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. RESULTS OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT WAS SUBJECT OF EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 11. WE SHALL ACRVELY PURSUE THESE AND OTHER PROPOSALS MADE IN FURTHER MEETINGS WITH AG AND, IF IT APPEARS WARRANTED, WILL PROPOSE FOLLOW UP WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA.

5. IN RELATION TO AMBASSADOR'S POINTS ON THE NEED FOR MORE
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PAGE 03 MEXICO 06865 01 OF 02 130212Z

ACTIVE AND EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE AND POSSIBLE USE OF MEXICAN MILITARY IN INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, IT IS USEFUL TO RECALL THAT IN RECENT MEETING WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANT INTEREST GOM NOW HAS IN DEVELOPING INFORMATION RESULTING FROM NARCOTICS SEIZURES AND CROP DESTRUCTION. MEXICANS ARE MORE THAN EVER CONVINCED THAT DESTRUCTION ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH AND THAT IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO FIND OUT WHO IS BEHIND THE FINANCING, PLANTING, AND TRAF-

FICKING AND TO PROSECUTE THEM TO MAXIMUM DEGREE POSSIBLE. HE DESCRIBED RECENT FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS IN MAZATLAN AREA WHERE FOR YEARS CROPS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BUT CULPRITS NOT IDENTIFIED NOR AFFECTED IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY. THE RECENT EFFORT TO FOLLOW UP ON LEADS DEVELOPED, UNFORTUNATELY, ALSO RESULTED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF ONE FEDERAL AGENT AND THE CRITICAL WOUNDING OF ANOTHER. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL RECOGNIZED HIS MANPOWER LIMITATIONS FOR SUCH FOLLOW UP BUT HIS CONVICTION THAT THIS IS NECESSARY SHOULD ARGUE IN FAVOR OF MORE AGENTS, MORE AGENT TRAINING, AND THE USE OF THE MILITARY IN SUCH INTELLIGENCE GATHERING. (AS A MATTER OF INTEREST, THE EMBASSY NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE IS IN THE PROCESS OF DRAFTING A STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE GREATER EXCHANGE OF AND ACCESS TO NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE GENERATED BY THE GOM AT ALL LEVELS. WE ARE PLEASED TO NOTE THAT THERE ARE DEFINITE SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT; FOR EXAMPLE, THEGOM HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO US THE IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS RESULTING FROM THE CATANIA CASE.)

6. THE QUESTION OF CORRUPTION DID NOT ARISE DIRECTLY IN OUR CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT, ALTHOUGH THE NAME OF ONE HIGHLY-PLACED OFFICIAL WAS MENTIONED BY THE AG IN THIS CONTEXT. THIS ISSUE, HOWEVER, WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL IN A RECENT MEETING WITH DCM AND DEA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR. IN THAT CONVERSATION AG DEALT FRANKLY WITH PROBLEM AND INFORMED US OF SOME SPECIFICS OF THEIR APPROACH TO IT. FIRST OF ALL HE DESCRIBED HIS TASK FORCE APPROACH TO ANTI-NARCOTICS RAIDS AND ACTIONS WHICH ARE NOW LARGELY CARRIED OUT BY HIGHLY COMPETENT AND TRUSTED AGENTS WHO HAVE CARTE BLANCHE TO FOLLOW UP LEADS ANYWHERE IN MEXICO WITHOUT REFERENCE TO GEOGRAPHIC JURISDICTION AND WITHOUT NECESSARILY INFORMING FEDERAL, STATE, OR OTHER POLICE AGENTS IN AREA OF OPERATIONS. THIS, HE SAID, HAS REDUCED POSSIBILITY OF LEAKS AND MORE IMPORTANTLY HAS MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY LOCAL STATE OR FEDERAL POLICE

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PAGE 04 MEXICO 06865 01 OF 02 130212Z

AGENT ASSIGNED TO A GIVEN AREA TO PROVIDE TRAFFICKERS ANY ASSURANCE OF PROTECTION. EMBASSY IS AWARE OF ACTIONS OF NUMBER

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 06865 02 OF 02 130156Z

72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7942

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MEXICO 6865

OF SUCH SPECIAL AGENTS WHO USING THEIR WIDE-RANGING TASK FORCES HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF THE RECENT VERY SUCCESSFUL "BUSTS," WITH CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN USUAL INTELLIGENCE FALLOUT. FREQUENTLY THEY TAKE THE LOCAL POLICE ALONG BUT WITHOUT TELLING THEM UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO BE INVOLVED IN.

7. FURTHER IN THE ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORT, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL CONFIDED IN THAT SAME MEETING THAT AN UNWRITTEN COMMITMENT OF NEWLY ELECTED STATE GOVERNORS IN MEXICO IS TO SUPPORT THE ANTI-DRUG EFFORT AND TO CLEAN OUT ROTTEN SPOTS IN STATE AND MUNICIPAL POLICE APPARATUS. IN FACT, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID, PRI GUBERNATORIAL PROSPECTS ARE APPROACHED ON THIS SUBJECT BEFORE THEIR CANDIDACY IS GIVEN THE PARTY'S NOD. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL SAID THAT 11 OF MEXICO'S GOVERNORS NOW FALL IN THIS CATEGORY AND FROM THEM HE CAN EXPECT ABSOLUTE COOPERATION IN HIS ANTI-DRUG EFFORT. HE ADDED THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT HE DOES NOT GET COOPERATION IN OTHER STATES BUT FREQUENTLY THE GOVERNORS WHO ARE IN THE THIRD OR FOURTH YEAR OF THEIR TERMS VIEW THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM AS A FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PREFER NOT TO ROCK THE BOAT IN THE FINAL YEARS OR MONTHS OF THEIR TENURE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: willialc
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MEXICO06865
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS DEAN
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730937/aaaabbez.tel
Line Count: 208
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: MEXICO 6818; MEXICO 5506
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: willialc
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <23-Jan-2002 by willialc>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NARCOTICS DEMARCHE TO PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA
TAGS: SNAR, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005